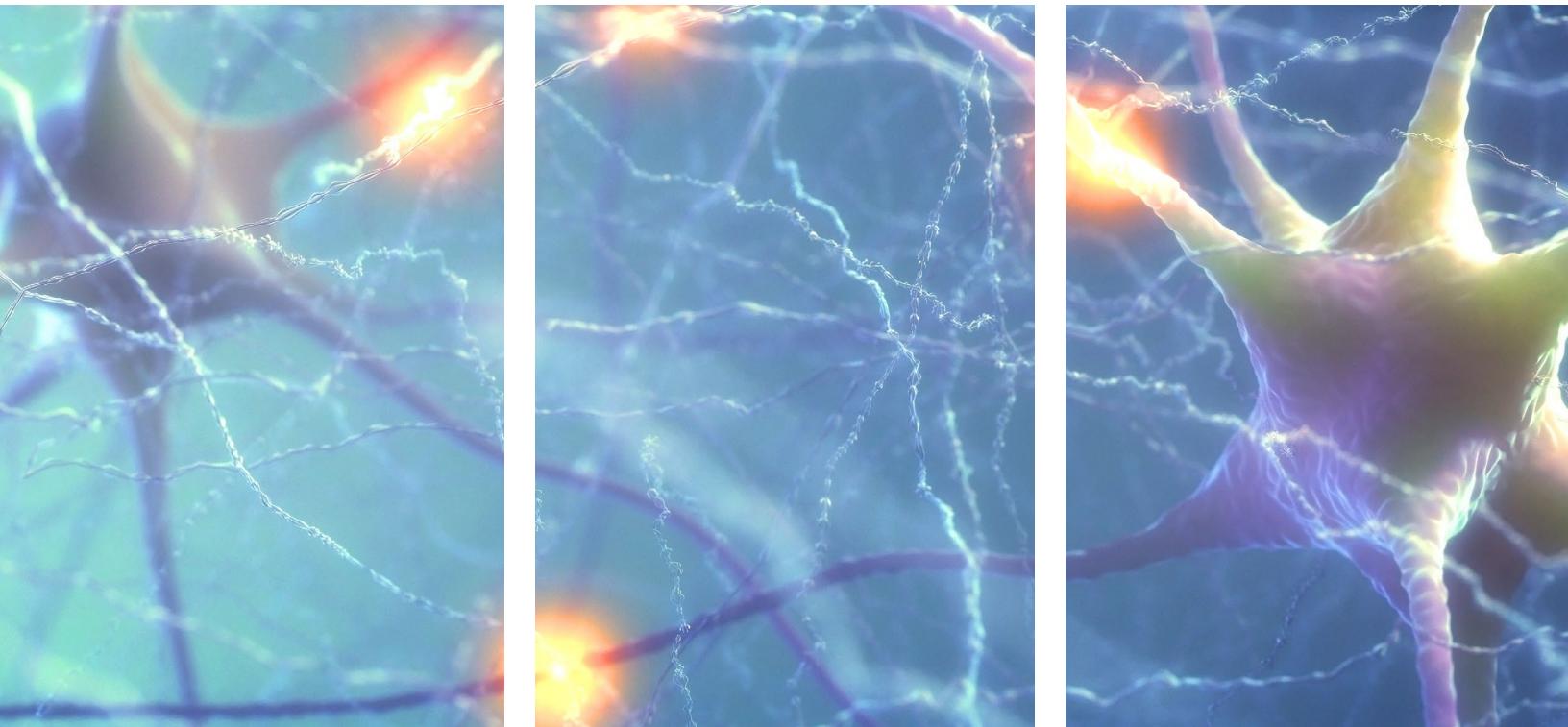


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 **Integrative Approach to Neurodegenerative Diseases** from Shelena Lalji, MD, FAGOC  
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# Liver, Leaky Gut and Brain Degeneration

Ameet Aggarwal, ND

**Dr. Eckel:** Welcome, everyone. I have my esteemed colleague and guest Dr. Ameet coming at us from Kenya. Welcome aboard today.

**Dr. Ameet:** Greetings, everyone, how you doing?

**Dr. Eckel:** I'm really excited to have you on the summit. We are talking about, this is a mouthful, stress, trauma, liver, leaky gut, adrenals, and brain degeneration. And I love that trail right up there to the Brain Degeneration Summit, all of these different facets that you are going to piece together for us, Dr. Ameet.

**Dr. Ameet:** Yeah, it's all interconnected. It's amazing how stress is actually connected to the liver. And I will go right into it.

**Dr. Eckel:** So let's start around...We are familiar with this concept of the gut-brain axis, and how the gut and digestive, and the microbiome is affecting the brain. But you're talking maybe some nuances around the leaky gut, and inflammation, and how that does, specifically, relate to brain degeneration.

**Dr. Ameet:** Right, okay. So you have your gut, right. And leaky gut, basically, means when the lining of your gut has holes in it because of inflammatory foods, and too much antibiotics, and too many drugs. With leaky gut, we have toxins going to the bloodstream. And that creates inflammation everywhere in the body, the

leading cause for asthma, eczema, arthritis, a lot of chronic conditions. And the oxidative stress from inflammation also damages the brain cells, number one.

Number two, chronic inflammation actually elevates cortisol levels. And elevated cortisol levels prohibit or inhibit the brain's ability to rewire itself or to heal itself, especially after trauma. So after trauma, the brain cells make the readjustment. Your brain's always rewiring itself based on experiences. And after healing experiences, it's important for your brain to rewire itself again so you go back to your neutral or authentic.

Now, if you're inflamed all the time, you won't be able to rewire yourself properly. And so chronic inflammation, therefore, almost inhibits processing of therapy in a very subtle level so meaning if you're less inflamed, you'll actually go through therapy much faster and better because your brain can rewire itself again.

**Dr. Eckel:** Because that makes total sense, you've got to just put that fire out first. On trauma, like what kind of trauma? Like, when I hear trauma or when the viewers are watching and hearing trauma, there's multiple different types of trauma. Are some worse than others or this could just be a mental/emotional trauma, as well, right, not just physical trauma?



**Dr. Ameet:** Right. Yeah, so most of the trauma I deal with is mental/emotional. So anything from... So I deal with a lot of terrorists attacks, rape, sexual abuse, financial losses, breakups, just seeing thugs beating somebody up kind of thing. Living out here, like you see a lot of things, right. And so trauma is basically any uncomfortable or difficult experience where you feel threatened or helpless.

And so after the trauma, even though the trauma's over, your subconscious still holds on to that experience and your conscious, at some level. And you never feel safe again, or a part of your body always feels helpless or paralyzed, or in fight or flight mode. And until you reprocess it, and because I use EMDR or Gestalt psychology, different therapies, even tapping, until you process that trauma, you are stuck in a subconscious fight, flight, or freeze response, or even a surrender response like you're giving up. And so you become powerless. And these responses actually change your brain chemistry or a rewiring of your brain chemistry.

And so in that state, you're constantly unsafe, even though now mentally, you think, "Okay, I'm safe," there's a subconscious part of you that is nervous or hasn't healed fully. And that nervousness always drives your adrenal glands into fight or flight to produce adrenal. And it burns your adrenal glands out, number one.

Number two, your adrenal glands produce cortisol as a response to stress. And so constant subconscious stress will keep your cortisol levels at a higher level. And this, as we talked about, the cortisol levels that inhibit brain regeneration, so then if there's degeneration going on, you won't heal degeneration fast enough if regeneration cannot happen.

And yes, certain belief systems, as well, after trauma, you have a belief about the world,

about yourself, about your parents, about your family, about your surroundings. And you never get over these beliefs until you get realizations, "aha moments," either through a different experience or through therapy whether it's Gestalt psychotherapy, EMDR, family constellation, which we'll talk about a bit more, as well, all these things free the mind, the subconscious from a trapped state.

And once you free yourself from a trapped state, you're out of the fight or flight, so adrenal glands settle down, then cortisol levels settle down then the brain is healthy. The fire is not going on in the brain so much so healing is more possible.

**Dr. Eckel:** Awesome! So I want you to talk about the EMDR and other components of what you're doing to heal the trauma and stop that oxidative stress because there are components, if you never address it, like, I think, a lot of times folks are like, "Okay, that's in the past. It's not affecting me anymore, right?"

**Dr. Ameet:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dr. Eckel:** How do you either assess...Or there's this component of the trauma is if you're not resolved, it's like it's now, right, in the memory bank. So you have discovered some things that are very effective at healing trauma. What has your experience been with that?

**Dr. Ameet:** Okay. So whether it's an emotional or physical condition, I ask the person when did this start? Yeah. So I've had patients, for example, with stomach ulcers or migraines. And I say, "Okay, when did this start?" And it's like, "Twenty years ago, Greg." Twenty years ago. And they're like, "Okay." And I'll say, "What happened 20 years ago?" They're like, "No, it's the stomach." I'm like, "No, no, no, no, no." Then I say certain, certain events, "Was there a divorce? Did somebody die? Was there an affair?" All these things, yeah, and



then I feel them change. You can see it right there. They get a realization, they're like, "Ah, yeah, there was an affair," or something like. Yeah.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah.

**Dr. Ameet:** And, boom, okay. Then I say, "Stay with that feeling now and notice what's happening." And then I'll do either some EMDR where you move your fingers from side to side. You get their eyes to move from side to side. It's called bilateral processing stimulation. And what that does is it helps the frontal cortex of the brain process what's stored in the limbic brain in the subconscious. And that processing helps you come out of that stuck place.

Or I'll say, "Okay, stay with the pain, and the surprise, and breathe with me, and just make contact with me." And when they make contact with me, in a very gentle way, that hidden part of that feels seen and it makes contact with me with love. So I'm giving them love in that moment. Then they can relax their defenses. The body armor is [inaudible].

And once they remove their defenses, their body armor, breathing changes, the vagus nerve kicks in, the whole physiology starts changing, and a very deep healing happens. I've treated migraines with this technique, stomach ulcers, some chronic pain issues, a lot of different things happening. I'm not an expert yet on like finding the exact emotional thing that causes it, but I believe everything has an emotional root. And I'm working on that.

**Dr. Eckel:** Awesome! Awesome! Oh, that is, it's so important. And as we get into then, maybe the constellation work—I interviewed Sarah Peyton on that—and this is a missing facet for a lot of patients' care around ancestral traumas, etcetera. So maybe you want to speak to that a bit.

**Dr. Ameet:** So family constellation is one of my favorite therapies. Just to remind people of what it is, it's basically that it's the belief that we actually carry some of the trauma that belongs to our ancestors. It could be trauma or imbalances in the family system.

And as a family constellation practitioner, how I find out what's going on is I'll have either representatives or I'll do it energetically, people or objects to represent your family members, either your parents, or your sister, your father, your mother, grandparents, or victims of war, or a murder in your family, or even a miscarried or aborted child.

People often ignore the fact that an aborted or a miscarried child still belongs in the family. And I often see the mothers who aborted a child and they have anxiety later on. And I'm not sure why. And then when we let go off this child with a lot of love and acknowledge it as a part of our heart and system, the anxiety reduces.

And if your mom gave birth or had an abortion or a miscarriage before you, Greg, then you would actually be the second child in the system, not the first. And when you recognize that is your correct position, your whole nervous system calms down.

So a lot of physical and emotional conditions are because of unseen traumas, or unseen imbalances that are occurring in your family system, and treating those imbalances is really treating the root cause. You can certainly use supplements and all that stuff. When you heal the emotional imbalance, boom, you need less intervention, they're more in balance with their spiritual energy. It's the most powerful therapy I've seen in my life.

**Dr. Eckel:** And is it like an ongoing situation or is it like a one-off? What's the set up for that type? Yeah.



**Dr. Ameet:** So generally speaking, they recommend doing the constellation, maybe not doing it too frequently, like not doing it every week, but maybe once every three months. You have to give time for everything to come back into line. So usually, you find the root cause in one session. But sometimes, trauma has multiple layers. And there's different facets.

Like, for example, my mom abandoned my father when I was very young. And I protected my father. I became his partner kind of thing. I have a loyalty towards him. So in my unconscious, my mind, my child brain, I am the parent to my father, which is very dysfunctional. And the way I act with my girlfriend or other people is getting more dominating or I won't even have space for a healthy relationship because I'll always be preoccupied with my loyalty to my father.

And when I can give back my father his power, his responsibility, his life, I say, "Look, I respect your fate. You're a man and you choose that woman before me. And I'm your son. Please bless me as I live my life." Wow! I get so much energy for myself. And then I can embrace a woman in my life and I can give her, now, my soul for a true partnership. And that makes it a healthier relationship. And if I'm absent, then my own children will suffer and get entangled with my preoccupation with my past. That's the spiritual aspect.

Biologically speaking, what happens, and they did this research, so imagine 9/11, pregnant, or any terrorist attack, pregnant women suddenly see a trauma. Their cortisol levels go up. Their adrenal glands keep on firing. So obviously, that's going to change the baby's biochemistry. And so children born of mothers who are in some stressful event, there are studies that are showing that they're actually more prone to anxiety, OCD, and different mental disorders.

**Dr. Eckel:** That's interesting. Yeah.

**Dr. Ameet:** Yeah, so there's a biological reason, as well as a subconscious, I guess, for lack of a better word, spiritual connection to all these things.

**Dr. Eckel:** And so I want to go through this line. So you've got the trauma component that leads into stress. The stress leads into inflammation. And the inflammation damages the brain.

**Dr. Ameet:** Yes, stress and trauma stress the adrenal system, and therefore, throw off the cortisol levels. Inflammation is caused by improper food, diet, too many antibiotics, etcetera, which damage the gut. And that causes leaky gut. Toxins go into the bloodstream, cause inflammation everywhere. And that also causes the cortisol imbalance, which affects the brain.

So we've got two things—stress and trauma affecting cortisol levels. Leaky gut affecting cortisol levels. And we haven't even talked about the liver yet. So we need to go into the liver.

**Dr. Eckel:** And that's right where we're going so perfect because everyone in that discussion is always about healing the gut, getting the inflammation down in the gut. And you've brought up a great point of what about the liver? So what about the liver, Dr. Ameet?

**Dr. Ameet:** Right. So my book and online [inaudible 14:00] focus on the liver. And I'm actually really seeing a new book on all the remedies for your liver.

**Dr. Eckel:** Love it.

**Dr. Ameet:** So very delicately, the liver is the most beautiful organ, I think. It's the master organ according to Chinese medicine. It controls hormonal balances, vitamin storage, immune cell activation, glucose and glycogen storage, fat/



cholesterol metabolism, all of these things. Yeah. And our liver is constantly inundated by toxins. Yeah, it's processing everything that comes into your gut, everything from the environment, all the pesticides, everything.

So if your liver becomes stagnant, it produces less bile. The less bile, there's poor digestion so more gas, bloating, constipation, and the worst being leaky gut. Yeah, you need healthy bile salts to, of course, improve digestion. The good bacteria in your gut depend on healthy bile. So if your bile is not flowing well, you're going to get a dysbiosis and an imbalance of good flora.

So in Chinese medicine, stress and frustration affect the liver. It protracts it. And people will get more irritable, more frustrated, and vice versa, if you are an irritable person, or a frustrated person, or you have a little resentment, then your liver will also be affected. And when your liver's affected, the less it goes in motion. Yeah, it's a vicious cycle.

Anyway, so your liver stagnation contributing with, of course, leaky gut, number one. Number two, with liver stagnation, remember the liver is processing all your cholesterol, yeah, and all your fats, and lipids. And that's super important for brain function, all your fats and lipids going to your brain. So if your liver is stagnant, you're going to have more free radicals floating around in your body creating damage to all your lipids and stuff like that in the brain.

So the more you clean the liver with, either alpha-lipoic acid, glutathione, all these herbs I mentioned in the book called the homeopathic remedies, herbs such as turmeric, and milk thistle are fantastic, then you have less oxidative stress in your body, less damage to your brain. You have better bile flow, with better bile flow, you have less gas, bloating, and digestion, constipation and leaky gut syndrome.

And so it's like unplugging the blockage in the whole system, in the plumbing. So literally, more than the gut—while the gut, I don't even like to separate them, yeah—don't ignore the liver when healing the gut because if you only focus on the gut, and the liver is stagnant, you're going to be disappointed.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah. And when you look at it, too, all of the blood flow from the gut gets filtered right to the liver. So it is all going right there.

**Dr. Ameet:** Everything, everything.

**Dr. Eckel:** So I love that. The big piece of this...So folks watching and our viewers might be thinking, "Well, how does this affect the brain, right?" And really this is the big point is there are a lot of options that you haven't accessed yet if you haven't been addressing these other facets of care because you go to the neurologist, you get put on a drug that there's no, most of these diagnoses, there's no known cure. And it's placating symptoms at best.

And what we're offering here is a whole different approach of treating whole people, not just pieces and parts and allowing the body to heal itself given the right information. So these facets that you've brought up around healing the trauma because a lot of those components, and it may have not even been their own trauma, it could have been their ancestors, their parents, their grandparents, their great grandparents, the great-great grandparents so it's really covering that. Like everyone in a neurodegenerative state, we need to look at that stuff. So what's your approach with folks when they come in and/or some of the online programs that you have, as well?

**Dr. Ameet:** Okay. So my online program focuses on healing the gut, the liver, and the adrenal system with herbs, homeopathics, supplements, etcetera, because you've got to stabilize and put



out the fire that's causing the degeneration in the brain and causing all these symptoms. Then, I have a whole section like four or five different videos, in fact, more, on healing trauma with different exercises, yes, because you've got to heal the body, but you've got to heal the mind, as well.

Yeah, and you've got to release those subconscious beliefs, the traumas, the pain, that you're carrying, otherwise if you only heal your body, you'll be perpetually stressing yourself, you'll be thinking negative thoughts, and negative thoughts, of course, change your personality.

You won't be exercising as much. You won't be confident enough. You won't be going for what you want in life. Yeah, so you'll be limiting yourself based on trauma. So we've got to heal that, as well. And then automatically, you start to take better care of yourself.

**Dr. Eckel:** So through the gut and the liver, so you've got the liver herbs, the homeopathics. You're really big into homeopathics. And it's one of your main modalities that you use. Do you do like a classical homeopathics, or acute prescribing, or some combination of both? What do you do with that?

**Dr. Ameet:** I do both. I do both because what I find is there are certain homeopathics that are fantastic for the liver. And there are certain homeopathics, and all linguists does this, goes through all the different remedies, the homeopathic remedies for specific types of trauma.

So you have like homeopathic remedies for shock, sudden shock. You have homeopathic remedies for betrayal, right, if your girlfriend cheated on you, or your boyfriend cheated on you, or you lost a loved one. You have homeopathic remedies for failure and suicidal thoughts. You have homeopathic remedies for low confidence.

So I use homeopathic remedies for situations. And then I also find the constitutional one over time. So after I understand the character, the constitutional character of a person appears more clearly when we remove these layers of shock, and trauma, and just the inflammation. And that's why I find it's important to heal the gut, as well as use homeopathy and heal the liver, as well, because there is so much toxicity in people that if you don't remove the toxins, their symptoms are so affected by thoughts that you don't know what their real constitution is.

It's like somebody coming to you on like 10 medications, 10 psychiatric medications, and they're completely like just stoned out, you don't what their personality's like, truly, because they're dumbed out. So someone with liver toxicity, it's super important to just clear all the toxins and then get a clear picture, "Okay, what are this person's true anxiety about? Is it a physiological thing? Is it a gluten sensitivity? Or is it because their father shouted at them when they were five years old and they haven't recovered and they've got this complex?

And when you hear that, boom, like the confidence comes up. Even testosterone levels change because imagine you're staying in a subservient state, always apologetic, always fearful, you're going to convert more of your testosterone into estrogen kind of thing. You're going to be very timid, but suddenly you're three steps up, physiology changes, adrenal glands changing, you get charged, you feel more confident, your hormones come more into balance, as well. And that, of course affects the brain.

**Dr. Eckel:** Love it! Are there specific brain remedies or are you, when you're addressing folks in a brain degenerative state or a neurodegenerative state, are there other remedies that you think of or herbs or other



prescriptions that you put into the program?

**Dr. Ameet:** Yeah, yeah, so in the program I discuss about restoring the adrenal gland function to save the brain because remember a lot of brain degeneration is inflammation and adrenal fatigue. So all your speakers probably talked about like leaky gut so probiotics, vitamin D, the fish oils, etcetera. And that's fantastic, of course. But you've got to heal the liver, one, because that's almost the primary or second resource of inflammation.

And the adrenal support is super important because a lot of people are burnt out and their adrenal glands are just wonky. So when you support the adrenal glands, I find the brain just recovers so fast because it's almost like the adrenal glands and the brain are one organ. And they are in a way. The hypothalamus-pituitary adrenal axis is a very strong—how do I call it?—link. Any time somebody feels stressed or threatened, they produce adrenaline right away from the adrenal system.

And so when you support the adrenal gland, then you feel more stable and resilient, then what happens is they calm down, actually. So adrenal herbs are not only stimulating, but they're actually nourishing to the point where you feel more stable. And when somebody feels more stable, they have less anxiety. And with less anxiety, the brain almost feels safer to heal itself because it's not in protective mode.

And then, of course, I use the homeopathic remedies, as well, for shock, and trauma, and for adrenal fatigue. And one is phosphoric acid. I love using that one. But there's others in the course where we are really supporting the adrenal system to recover energetically, so coming out of that frenzy. And so I use the homeopathic to change the vibrations of the system. And when the frenzy has reduced, the adrenal glands are still depleted, and that's when you throw in the

herbs like Rhodiola, Ashwagandha, whatever is needed to now nourish the body. It's like the food now.

So homeopathy is almost like the counseling in a peer-review research. You release the trauma with the homeopathy. And then you bring in the food and the nourishment so the body rebuild itself.

**Dr. Eckel:** That was lovely.

**Dr. Ameet:** And there's other herbs we could use to increase blood flow to the brain like ginkgo, and rosemary, and things like that. I'll do that. Of course, that's supportive therapy, but I always really focus on first getting the fillers about the root cause, which is trauma, ancestral trauma, and then the gut, the liver, and the adrenal system because then when you do that you need less remedies over time then.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah. Yeah, that emphasis on the root cause and you really dialed it in to what exactly you're seeing to get the most benefit for the most people is going at those core issues. Coming down the end here is there anything else that you would like to share with our viewers and listeners out there around their brain health, healing, whatever comes to mind?

**Dr. Ameet:** Mmm, hmm. Truly what I'm drawn to say is self-forgiveness and love. So we have a lot of self-criticisms going on in the body, negative thoughts, "I'm not good enough. I need to be better and more successful, duh, duh, duh." All this pressure on the mind is not good based on standards that the media's putting out there, personal growth courses, all these things, it's exhausting us, it's exhausting our nervous system.

So I think self-love and self-forgiveness is such a healing experience that it takes your body out of flight or fight because self-criticism, I believe,



is strongly connected to autoimmune, attacking the cell. So just going to more self-forgiveness, self-love, and hugging once in a while. There's research coming out where loving acts are really healing. So yeah, please love yourselves more.

And a plea to everyone, I'm doing community work out here in Kenya so please get my book, and the online course, and just spread the love really because love is what's missing. I think, for a lot of people, we're starved.

**Dr. Eckel:** We are. And that is we do need more love. So I'm full on in alignment with you. I want you to talk about your work in Kenya and what you're doing.

**Dr. Ameet:** Okay, so I started a mobile clinic for communities that don't have health care, and driving around in a jeep, and sitting under a tree. And so I wrote my book and the online course to help raise funds for this because I just like to give back to people who are supporting the cause.

And so whenever I get enough funds, I'll support that community work, or an orphanage here, or there's a disabled children's home now we have in my town where children are abandoned because of deformities, they're just abandoned. And this wonderful nurse has picked them up in villages. So yeah, we just try and help out. We just try and help out. So whatever you can do.

**Dr. Eckel:** Lovely. And we were talking before we got on the air. And you, at one point, had students coming down to help with that work and really learning bush medicine of how to provide care in the wild, literally.

**Dr. Ameet:** Yeah. So I would coach students from around the world who come and volunteer with me so they'd get clinical experience and would learn a bit of the herbs here, but mostly with books on homeopathic. So I would train them

on how to use homeopathy effectively to treat conditions. And now my goal is to raise enough funds to make it more affordable for students to come.

And I actually want to train students from around the world on treating mental health conditions, that's my new project. They can come and volunteer with me and also go through a personal coaching program, which I teach every year in Italy now, where people go through a transformation process to heal their own self, they've had their own traumas and beliefs so that they become more clear and effective with their patients.

And so I'm trying to create better doctors out there. Most naturopath, everyone out there is wonderful. I'm not saying that I'm better than anybody. You know what I mean? Sorry, if that came out a bit strange. But I want to help students and naturopaths become more clear within their heart so that they can fill the space better for clients. So learning how to do the whole adrenal, liver, etcetera, and healing trauma.

**Dr. Eckel:** Oh, I love it. I'm really excited to help get your message out, get some support going for your work because it's so important. And I really appreciate you coming on the Brain Degeneration Summit and sharing this information with us.

**Dr. Ameet:** Thank you. And I'm waiting for you to show up on my doorstep in Kenya because we're going to do a mobile clinic together, I promise you.

**Dr. Eckel:** I'm coming. I'm taking you up on that. Alright, thank you, Dr. Ameet!

**Dr. Ameet:** Lots of love. Lots of love.



# Integrative Approach to Neurodegenerative Diseases

Shelena Lalji, MD, FAGOC

**Dr. Eckel:** All right, well, welcome everyone, I've got a great talk today with Dr. Shelena Lalji, also known as Dr. Shel. Our topic today, we're talking about an integrative approach to ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases. Welcome aboard, Dr. Shel.

**Dr. Shel:** Great to be here, nice to be here Dr. Eckel. I'm so happy you're doing this.

**Dr. Eckel:** I am so excited to get your message out.

**Dr. Shel:** Absolutely.

**Dr. Eckel:** It's going to help so many folks. I want to start out with saying how did you get into this specialty and focus area for yourself?

Dr. Shel: Absolutely. Well, it's like I always say, sometimes you don't choose your mission, but the mission chooses you. And in my case, the mission definitely choose us because I'm a board-certified OB-GYN, and I've practiced functional medicine for well over 15 years now, in medicine for about 25, and it just makes me think that all of those years of functional medicine was really culminating into ALS.

So September of 2017, my sweet darling husband, Ayeez, was starting to become symptomatic. And he walks into my office. He's a dentist. He practices right next to me. He walks into my office

and says, "Shel, I think I have ALS." For someone to come, and out of the blue, and he's a very, very intelligent man, very intuitive, and as soon as he said that I said, "There's no way. I mean, come on, there's no way you have ALS." And we went right to our good friend, neurologist and said, "You know, what do you think?"

And fast forward, he did end up getting a diagnosis of ALS in November of '17, 2017. And one of the most prestigious conventional institutions in the country, at that time, gave him six to nine months to live. And it's like I say with ALS, a lot of times when you go to get that diagnosis and you get the diagnosis, along with the diagnosis, basically, is given a death sentence so you're basically told, "There is no treatment. There is no cure. An average person lives anywhere from two to five years. And you're going to lose the ability to walk, to talk, to eat, to swallow, eventually to breath. And then, that's going to be that."

So it's one of those things where it was really heart wrenching. And being a functional medicine doctor, myself, who, and as you know, Dr. Eckel, we're so used to treating patients who are untreatable, we get to the root cause, we usually, typically, see patients, at least I know I do, who have been to 8 to 10 doctors. And then, they end up in our offices and they're like, "Well, this is my last stop. You know, this is my last hope."



And so this just was presented to me as okay, now we have an untreatable, incurable disease. Now, let's figure this out. So that's how my journey started. And we have two teenagers. My son was 13 at the time. My daughter was 16. So our lives just turned upside down.

**Dr. Eckel:** Wow! Yeah, and you're doing tremendous work across the board with this. So having a similar journey, I tell our patients, "You don't want to be the interesting patient in our clinics."

**Dr. Shel:** No, not at all.

**Dr. Eckel:** And so with that, so great, this is your husband, he's still with us.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes! Yes!

**Dr. Eckel:** And you are putting together some amazing programs. You wanted to bring forth the message today. And why we're doing the Brain Degenerative Summit is to provide some hope for folks that there are clinicians out here working from their hearts, and looking for cures, and correcting these "incurable." So I think we're both in agreement and alignment around that it is a matter of time until we find the cure.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes, absolutely.

**Dr. Eckel:** And I feel like we're very close on a lot of these neurodegenerative states.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes, definitely.

**Dr. Eckel:** So your message out here today, you wanted to talk about, on our agenda, is being your own advocate. So what have you found around that?

**Dr. Shel:** Absolutely. So anybody with a diagnosis of, whether it's ALS, Parkinson's, MS, Alzheimer's,

dementia, any such neurodegenerative disease, and they all fall under an umbrella, if you will, if you are being told by your conventional doctor or anybody else that there is no hope, this is the path that it's going to take, you need to pause right there, and you need to say that I personally have hope. And you've got to really go in with a positive mental attitude and the ability to think things through. Get the right people on the team and get to the root cause so you're able to see what caused this condition in you.

So, for example, in ALS, only 10% of ALS is genetic. So if you don't have the genes that we know of like the C9orf72 or the SOD1, then the question is what caused your ALS? And the other question is what is your progression going to be like? So I truly believe, after two and a half years of what's equivalent to, I would say, three 3 PhD degrees, as much research as we've done with ALS, is that it's not just one condition. It is an umbrella of several different things that are piled into one because their symptoms are very similar.

So, as an example, my husband has what's called a very rapid progression. And as I mentioned earlier, he was given six to nine months to live once his diagnosis was made. We are very blessed. We are at two and a half years. And he actually continues to improve, which we're super excited about. And the other thing that is very, very, very important to mention in ALS is, to date, Dr. Eckel, there has been 43 identified and confirmed ALS reversals. Now, that news needs to really get out there.

**Dr. Eckel:** It really does, yeah.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes, yes, because that gives you hope. And that was confirmed by Dr. Richard Bedlack at Duke University, a very reputable university, and he's done some incredible work. Gone back and looked at the charts, looked at the data, looked at the records, and identified that these



patients truly did have diagnosed ALS. It was not a misdiagnosis. They had diagnosed ALS. And they truly had it reversed.

In fact, one person that I've just met and I invited to our Healing ALS Conference that we just had, in Utah in October of 2019, he reversed from a trachea, a feeding tube, and being in a wheelchair all the time to now being able to walk, to breathe on his own, to eat on his own, and to talk.

**Dr. Eckel:** That is incredible.

**Dr. Shel:** It is.

**Dr. Eckel:** And you're right this just definitely needs to get out there because folks need to have that vision of, "Oh, it's actually been done." When you look at the four-minute mile, nobody could do that before it happened. And there were like 50 other runners in that same year. So to get this information out, actually that's a significant reversal that we haven't heard about that before. So that's incredible.

**Dr. Shel:** It is really incredible. And actually, that's a reversal that was brought to my attention by Mass General. And it's wonderful because even though, we're practicing from a functional, integrative, medicine approach, the lead at the ALS Clinic at Mass General, Dr. Merit Cudkowicz, has been amazing, as far as connecting us to patients so that we can give them that root-cause approach.

And yeah, even with the conference that we had in Utah, it was all about giving hope. So we had livestreamed in 43 countries and we had 300 ALS patients and caregivers attend the Healing ALS Conference, which just was tremendous because everybody left with hope. And hope causes miracles to happen.

**Dr. Eckel:** That's awesome!

**Dr. Shel:** Yeah.

**Dr. Eckel:** So piggybacking that, so how do people find the right practitioner?

**Dr. Shel:** So I think that is a tough call. And so what we're doing, as part of our ALS Heroes Foundation, is we're trying to initiate more of a functional medicine training program to be able to train doctors to be able to take a functional approach and a root-cause approach. So hopefully, that will be coming up soon where we can actually have a list of practitioners who follow the root-cause approach.

And so certainly, trying to find functional neurologists or functional medicine docs who have treated ALS patients before, and are open to being very hopeful, and being very innovative, and really being cutting-edge, but yet safety first. Safety and efficacy have to go hand in hand.

**Dr. Eckel:** You know that first tenant, it has come up in multiple of the interviews of the first tenant of medicine is "do no harm."

**Dr. Shel:** Correct.

**Dr. Eckel:** And so that is really a guiding principle here. It's not a renegade or wild west, there is a systematic approach that we use, but in treating whole, dynamic beings, I think, you said it really well there.

**Dr. Shel:** Yeah, definitely.

**Dr. Eckel:** So what have you found or what is your specific approach because I know you've got a clinical center of excellence and development here around these practices for treating folks with neurodegeneration? What differentiates or what have you found as some ways to get in on this?

**Dr. Shel:** Sure. Well, I think, what's really



important is for us to be able to really try to find the triggers. So we know that we have a tremendous amount of oxidative stress, neuroinflammation, and glutamate excitotoxicity that might be leading to the affect that ALS has on the motor neurons. So we know that ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease, which essentially affects the upper and lower motor neurons. And when it does that, that's when the loss of all the motor functions come into play.

So the question is what's causing the motor neuron, either death, or what is making them not function optimally? And so when you start looking into that, I usually like to start with gut. The gut is the center of everything. And I think when we were all in conventional medicine, that was something we never looked at. But we know that gut inflammation can be the root cause of so many chronic diseases, even cancers, neurodegenerative diseases, heart disease, etcetera.

So we always start with the gut. We look to see what's happening in the microbiome. Does this patient have leaky gut? Does this patient have other infectious agents in their body, whether it be parasites, whether it be candida, whether it be Lyme disease, whether it be retroviruses? What is causing this glutamate excitotoxicity in our patients?

So we start with the gut. We start with going into what's causing all this oxidative stress in this person's body? So we really are focused on trying to make way on all the different systems that we look at. So the first thing that I like to try to counsel my patients on is you have a body that is very complexed. You've got to look at all aspects of mind, body, and spirit.

But when you're looking at the physiologic side, you want to really divide it up into many different angles. And the way that I like to break it down for

my patients because it can be quite complexed, but I like to break it down to make it easier for them, so I like to start with the gut.

Like I mentioned, I like to look at the nutritional deficiencies. Very important. If we don't have the right nutrients, the right antioxidants, the right essential fatty acids, the right amino acids, we're not going to be able to process anything in our body the right way.

I like to look at endocrine abnormalities so we start looking into your sex hormones, your adrenal hormones, your thyroid hormones. And again, the issue here is not whether you have just a low level of these hormones, it's all about optimization. And I tell my patients all the time, you need to be optimized with these hormones. It is not sufficient to just have bare minimum levels.

So we dig in and we do some very, very in-depth analysis of all of those hormones because that's very important. I like to look at neurotransmitters because what's causing the different stressors and how is it impacting your neurotransmitter levels, whether it be your epinephrine, your serotonin, your norepinephrine, dopamine, GABA, all of those neurotransmitters are very important to make your brain function properly. So we look at all of these conditions.

The other thing that I definitely want to mention is we've seen a lot of analyses where we're seeing microbes to really contribute to some of these conditions. So such as, like I mentioned earlier, Lyme disease is a big one. More people have Lyme disease than we know because a lot of times the traditional testing for Lyme disease are just not sensitive enough to pick up different things like Bartonella, Babesia, also Borrelia. We just don't have the sensitive tests, unless we go to specialty testing.

So I do test everybody for Lyme disease. Check



them for candida overgrowth. Check them for Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegaly virus, as well as mold. In our entire world right now, we're seeing an overabundance of mold and mycotoxins, which we know that that's a big, big neurotoxin. And so a lot of it is about, let's look and see what's going on deep inside your body to see where the inflammation is coming from?

Do you have gut dysbiosis? Do you have leaky gut? What do we need to do about it? Do you have neuroinflammation? Do you have nutritional imbalance, endocrine imbalance? What is happening that got you over this hump because there is a trigger? We all have the propensity. So if we don't have the genes, and 90% of ALS patients and neurodegenerative patients, most of them don't have a genetically disposition, but it's really the epigenetics. And if we don't address the epigenetics, then how are we going to treat the patients properly and with the right tools? So that's where I start, Dr. Eckel.

**Dr. Eckel:** Wow! That is comprehensive, Dr. Shel. Yeah, that is. And it has to be right...

**Dr. Shel:** It has to be.

**Dr. Eckel:** because there is not really an imaging or a blood marker to diagnose this condition.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes. And the other thing is, I want to make sure I mention heavy metals. There's no way to check and see if you have heavy metals unless you actually test for it. We're constantly exposed. We're constantly exposed to lead, to mercury, to gadolinium, if we've had certain imaging tests and things of that nature.

So it's really important that we get to the root cause and do these analyses. And I know the analyses may seem, "Oh, my, gosh, it's so complexed. Oh, my, gosh, it must be so expensive." We try our very best, if we have

patients who have insurance plans, etcetera, to use and to do whatever we can with their insurance plans. But certainly, there are tests that, unfortunately, insurance companies don't cover. But it's what I ask patients is what I ask my own self with my own husband, "What is our health worth? You know, what is our health worth when we end up with one of these diagnoses?"

And everything that I've mentioned, I've mentioned it because I have done it on my own husband. And we have gone down that tract. And we have found things that we were then able to correct: imbalances, toxins, heavy metals. He's a dentist. He had a ton of mercury. He had a ton of mercury. And I'm glad we found it.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah, and that is really, I think, the key component when you're talking about getting to the root cause is by looking and turning over all of these stones, you can come up with really individualized novel approaches...

**Dr. Shel:** That's exactly right.

**Dr. Eckel:** for the person in front of you. So it's not the same program for everybody because we don't have a known mechanism of action for ALS or really for any of these neurodegenerative states.

**Dr. Shel:** Absolutely, absolutely. And it has to be a customized approach, you're absolutely right, because if you have a patient who may have X-toxin, but not Y-toxin, well, we're going to go this way. Everybody doesn't need chelation. Everybody doesn't need Lyme treatment. Everybody doesn't have gut dysbiosis, although, most people do. Everybody doesn't have mold. But when you do, those are the layers of onion that you have to peel to then be able to get to the point of regeneration.

So it's like I say, and this is the best way I can explain it, there is a forest fire, ALS, MS,



Parkinson's, all of those conditions are what I call a forest fire. But first, what do you have to do? You've got to first find the fire. Then you have to stop the fire. Find the fire by doing all the testing. Stop the fire by really addressing the root causes and treating the root causes. And then, you rebuild the forest.

And that's when we come in to the regeneration with stem cells with doing procedures such as, if you're looking into apheresis, plasmapheresis, exosomes, regenerating with things like PRP, exosomes, stem cells, and all of these things are, trust me, we've done it all.

**Dr. Eckel:** Mmm hmm, you really have.

**Dr. Shel:** We have. There is not much we have not done. The great news is we've learned a lot along the ways. And I'm very humble in saying that we didn't always do it in the right order because we didn't know. And that's why it's very vital for me to be able to share what we've learned so that other people don't make the same mistakes and they're able to get to where we are now without making those mistakes and to do it in the right order.

So the right order is always detoxification first, but very gently and gingerly. Once you find out what your root causes may be, you've got to eliminate them in the right order so that you don't end up having this release of toxins and Herxheimer reactions because that, a lot of times, will accelerate your progression. And so that's important to really get out there to the audience is you don't just throw everything at the fire because if you do, you might end up causing a little bit more harm than good.

And that's why you have to be under the care of somebody who knows what they're doing so that they do it in the right order. And you can't rush the process. It's not a good idea to rush the process.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah, that's crucial, actually, for folks to understand because you're tenuously perched with this condition and you can really push your head under the water if you do it in the wrong order or go too quick. And that's really, I find that one of the hardest things is to, as a practitioner, to convey, "It's like, okay, I know you want this gone like a year ago, but we have to do it in a metered dose and at the rate that's right for you because you can create more illness or worsening of symptoms."

And so not to be fear-based, but in reality, that could be really dangerous, really, if you rush it, or you get on some protocol off the Internet, or whatever. So you really want to get a trained, licensed professional to help. And that has walked the walk and have been through it.

So let's talk about that, the right order. So you're talking about detoxification as one of the things. You do the testing. You find some novel approaches. You address those things.

**Dr. Shel:** Right, you do.

**Dr. Eckel:** Are there protective mechanisms that you put in at the beginning or are you really focused on that piece first?

**Dr. Shel:** So that's a great question. The first and foremost piece that I try to work on because that has to carry throughout the journey, throughout the healing journey, is the positive mental attitude. To me, that is so vital, Dr. Eckel, because unless the patient has a positive mental attitude, and the belief, the true belief that they can heal, that their bodies...And we know this, our bodies are so miraculous and so magical, that we are truly equipped with the healing powers, we just have to give it the correct ingredients, if you will. So I always start with lifestyle first and foremost.

So I always make sure that I'm getting the patient



on a complete anti-inflammatory eating program. That's very important to me because if I'm trying to work on reducing their inflammation and the patient keeps eating things that is going to be proinflammatory such as your gluten, your sugars, your dairy, and all such things, so I like to look at what's happening in their gut. What are they sensitive to? Do they have candida overgrowth because then they're going to need to be on a yeast-free program, and try to just eliminate the inflammatory issues that are coming into them? So the healthy diet is huge.

Start to meditate and reduce emotional trauma. I've also really discovered that and we all have emotional trauma. Which one of us does not? We've all had issues that we've been through. Maybe it's childhood. Maybe it's relationships. Perhaps it's other kinds of pain and loss that we've been through. And I encourage my patients to really start going through that emotional healing journey using, whether it's EVOX emotional healing or meditation, yoga, a combination therapy, recall healing, there are so many modalities.

And it's not a one size fits all. So I'm very careful. In my initial assessment, I take a very, very, detailed history about their childhood, their emotional state, their relationships. What was the trigger? And you know what I've found a lot of times, Dr. Eckel? Is when patients are diagnosed with something really tough, whether it be ALS, MS, even cancers, there is usually a trigger that really puts them in a very depleted state and a very vulnerable state.

And then comes this disease process because a lot of diseases, let's face it, are trying to teach us something, are trying to change our lives in some positive manner. And so I like to use that approach where let's go into your family history, your childhood history, your physical trauma, emotional trauma. What kinds of things are you

constantly exposed to? Do you have mold in the house? Or do you have constant stressors in your relationship? Do you have a lot of EMF exposure?

That's a huge one, EMF. And I'm sure you have other speakers who are going to talk about this. But EMF is one of the biggest toxins that we are exposed to, even now as we're having this discussion. And how are we going to get rid of that? Well, we can definitely reduce it. I tell every patient, "Turn off your Wi-Fi when you're sleeping." So my Wi-Fi in my house is off from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Bong, it's gone because we don't need it.

But EMF, in general, is going to hinder anything that we're trying to do as far as healing neurologically because we know that it doesn't heed neurological healing. So that's one of the things that I lay down very, very early on. So exercise, lifestyle, stress, diet, positive attitude, meditation, yoga, and positive affirmations, always listening to positive things. I give them a list of things that I want them to listen to, some online courses. And all of that just sets the ground. That's the fertile ground in which healing can happen.

**Dr. Eckel:** Lovely. And that is a very crucial step there, right.

**Dr. Shel:** A very crucial step.

**Dr. Eckel:** Our innate intelligence is meant to heal, but we have to give it the right information.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes, yes.

**Dr. Eckel:** And so that is left out of most medicine, right there.

**Dr. Shel:** Yes, it is. In fact, I was just speaking to another ALS patient who came to see me last week. And, unfortunately, and this is the impact we're trying to make through our work, is most



ALS patients or neurodegenerative patients, are seen by conventional medicine practitioners and they're given maybe a couple of supplements now, which is good, and maybe a couple of medications. And that's it.

And they're not really talked to about the entire integrative approach of what their lifestyle needs to be in which the healing can happen. And so that's a very, very big thing that I think is important to change to that.

**Dr. Eckel:** So coming down the home stretch, that's a huge message right there. Is there any other essential items that you'd like to share to get that message out to folks that are watching?

**Dr. Shel:** Sure, absolutely. So I think the couple of things that I think is very important to take away from this is a) have hope and have that belief that you, too, can heal because your body's able to do that and ALS reversals are documented so never doubt that. B, rid your entire environment with toxicity. Just get rid of it. You need to use non-toxic cleaning products, personal care products, eliminate pesticides, check your home for mold. So the environment is very, very important.

Find out about biologic dentistry. If you have mercury amalgams, they need to come out, but with a biologic dentist who can do that, as well as get rid of cavitations. And hopefully, you'll have somebody speaking about that, as well. When you do detoxifying, do it slowly and gingerly under the care of a practitioner using very simple things such as infrared sauna, Aqua Detox, other detoxifying modalities that are safe and that are well-proven, but very gentle and get rid of that.

Treat the gut. Make sure you're emptying your bowel on a daily basis. Treat the infections. Avoid proinflammatory foods. Focus on positive mental attitude. Your emotional and psychological stress can only make this worse. But if you have a very

positive message, it's going to actually increase healing tremendously.

Look in to CBD oil. There's been a ton of studies on CBD, very high quality, of course. There's a lot of stuff out there. You've got to be careful. But there are a lot of studies with CBD. In fact, my husband has had a ton of spasticity. And he's very upper neuron dominant. Lots of spasticity. And we were able to get rid of all of that with highest quality CBD.

Get on the right supplements. Think about IV nutrients. IV nutrients are very important because most patients with neurodegenerative diseases do have gut dysbiosis so their absorption is very limited. And when you look at IV nutrients such as glutathione, phenylbutyrate, phosphatidylcholine, Myers, such IV infusions, you and both know, you get 100% absorption with these IV nutrients.

Make sure your endocrine abnormalities are completely corrected. You look at your adrenals, your sex hormones, your thyroid. And when all of this has happened and you're living the perfectly balanced life, as best as you can, that's when you look into the regeneration with the stem cells, with the exosomes. And don't just jump around into different stem cell clinics and things of that nature.

I would definitely say that there are some great practitioners out there trying very hard to do the right thing, but you have to do your own research. And it has to feel right to you. So for us, it was research first, then intuition, then we moved forward. And you've got to trust your intuition.

**Dr. Eckel:** Lovely! Thank you, Dr. Shel, for that awesome inspiration and message today. Thank you for coming out.

**Dr. Shel:** You bet, it was great to be here. Thank you, Dr. Eckel. And if more information is needed



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or wanted, certainly, I would love for people to join us on foundation and join us as we're trying to make a difference on ALSHeroes.com and DrShel.com. Yes, thank you.

**Dr. Eckel:** Awesome!



# Leaky Brain & Neurodegeneration Connection

Ryan Wohlfert, DC, CCSP

**Dr. Eckel:** All right, well, welcome, everyone. I've got Dr. Ryan Wohlfert, our expert on brain health here. And we're going to talk about leaky brain and the neurodegeneration connection. Welcome aboard, today, Dr. Ryan.

**Dr. Ryan:** Greg, thanks for having me.

**Dr. Eckel:** So I wanted to know, on this particular topic, how did you arrive at it just for your own personal stake in this for brain health?

**Dr. Ryan:** It's been quite a long journey. I've been in practice for 20, geez, almost 20 years now, and it's been a journey of finding out how I can best help my brain health, my patients' brain health, their longevity, their energy. And I guess it started probably about 12 years ago if I want to put a date on it to when I saw how my grandparents, like how their health diminished, and how like one of them was diagnosed with cancer, and within three months was gone, and is wasting away.

And then, I saw how another of my grandparents had heart disease, pacemaker, endless doctors' visits for the last 10 to 15 years of his life. And then the biggest one, as far as brain health goes, one of my other grandmas, seeing how dementia affected her, how she lost her memory, lost her sight, just couldn't remember, obviously, with dementia, that neurodegeneration of the brain, wasting away in a nursing home, my parents taking care of her, visiting her non-stop, and just

basically losing her independence, losing her life. And it was during that time where I thought to myself, "I don't want...It's just like learn from their mistakes." Obviously, it's not a mistake that was their journey and now this is mine is learning from them how I want to take care of myself so I can have my independence, so I can have my freedom, so I can have my mobility and my brain, and everything that goes along with health, and longevity, and energy, and so, basically, my kids and my family don't have to take care of me. I want to be there with them and for them.

So that's how I, if I put a date on it or a timeframe, that's, I think, when it all started. And that led me down this path of leaky brain, which is a relatively new concept, but I saw it in an article somewhere, a research article, and through some other summits. And I just looked more into that. And it gives a good description of what can happen and how the brain works. When I first gave that leaky brain or talk to somebody about it, it was like, "What is it like brain leaking out of your head or something?"

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah, it sounds pretty gross, actually.

**Dr. Ryan:** But it catches your attention, right?

**Dr. Eckel:** Yes.

**Dr. Ryan:** It's not as that dramatic like you can see it. And that is good and bad. With your health,



sometimes we don't know things are happening until we feel them or see them, even though, and you know with brain disorders, Parkinson's, MS, dementia, Alzheimer's, those are years in the making. Ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, they're developing. And they can start with brain fog, they can start with just losing your memory here and there, losing your energy, maybe headaches, even stomach issues, those are all signs that, "Okay, maybe there's something not completely functioning with the brain."

**Dr. Eckel:** So what is the leaky brain? So it's now that gross picture of this ooze coming out your ear, but it is these more subtle, longer-term symptoms. But sometimes, it can be very dramatic for folks. Yeah?

**Dr. Ryan:** Well, exactly. So, I think, the listener is, I don't want to generalize, but, I think, they've probably heard of leaky gut by now, especially if they've been watching these summits, and docuseries, and filmmakers. And leaky gut has been the vernacular for years now. And it's very similar to that.

Just like the gut has a protective barrier, protective lining, all the way from your mouth, all the way down the other end through the intestines, through the esophagus, stomach, everywhere in between, it allows certain things through into the bloodstream. And it doesn't allow other things. Like, by things, I mean substances, chemicals, undigested proteins, amino acids. So some should be let through and then some shouldn't.

The brain has a very similar protective barrier, it's called the blood-brain barrier. And that's even tighter than what the gut lining is. So think about like the gut lining. The way I like to describe it is, think about a laced-up shoe, and normally, those laces should be really tight so only the smallest of particles should be let through, or like little grains of sand, or water. If you step in a puddle, yeah, it's

probably going to get through. And that's normal. That's how it should happen.

But with our lifestyle—and then we'll talk about what causes leaky brain. It's very similar to what causes leaky gut. But we can talk about that in a minute after I explain what actually that is—but now with these lifestyles, these causes that we'll talk about, it loosens up their shoelaces so now, bigger pebbles, bigger stones can get through. Things that shouldn't be allowed in are in.

And when they get through that shoe, so now let's say that it gets through the gut, it gets into the bloodstream, and those same things can go up to the brain and attack the brain. So the brain, again like I said is very similar to the blood-brain barrier, they attack. If they attack, they're bombarded with these toxins and chemicals.

And we might, as well, get into that right now, is what causes it. So what causes these disruptions, causes these interferences, causes the damage to that blood-brain barrier, and in turn that's essentially what it's called is leaky brain, is when these unwanted chemicals and substances can get in, now it attacks the brain cells, you can get symptoms like brain fog, low energy, fatigue, tiredness, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, all the way up to, if it's left unchecked and we don't get rid of it, and heal and upgrade the brain, well now, it can lead to dementia, it could lead to Parkinson's, basically these brain neurodegeneration disorders and diseases.

So what causes it? What causes leaky brain? What causes this like attack on it? Well, there's a few things. One, there's toxins. In other words, let's separate it into a couple of different things, actually three. There're toxins. And by toxins and toxicities that could be biotoxins. So it's viruses, parasites, mold, bacteria, fungus, and candida. And so these like living things that we're exposed to, they attack the gut, they attack the brain.



And now, on the other unliving side, the environmental toxins that we're bombarded and exposed to on a daily basis. Eighty to one hundred thousand new chemicals have been introduced since World War II, I think, that our bodies haven't been completely designed—well, they are and they aren't—their designed to get rid of toxins, but not at the level that we are exposing our body to. Our liver, our brain, our kidneys, they're just overtasked and overworked so they completely attack our system, our brain cells, our body cells. And then they accumulate, accumulate, accumulate.

So environmental toxins, glyphosate, herbicides, pesticides. Heavy metals, that's a huge one, right. Heavy metals, they love the brain. A lot of those metals loves the brain. And what I like to equate it to is they gunk up the system.

**Dr. Eckel:** I like that technical term.

**Dr. Ryan:** Gunk, I use it all the time because, again it's like, it's just like this sludge. And if those cells, which are supposed to be nice, and functioning, and working, and giving you great memories, and thinking ability, and cognitive abilities, if they're loaded with things that aren't conducive to creating that, it's like filling up a bucket with a bunch of trash, there's no room for the good stuff, there's no room for the vitamins, and the minerals, and the micronutrients, the enzymes, the antioxidants to help nourish the brain, nourish the body so it can thrive and fulfill its purpose.

**Dr. Eckel:** That's really well put. And we have different facets of each point of the topics we have as part of this summit with some of the world's experts on those topics so I'm glad you put it really well put on putting that together on, well, what causes this leaky brain scenario? And we're like swimming in it. So that's the environmental component.

We had the other toxin component on the bioaccumulation of other gunk, for lack of a better term. But I use that same technical term in my practice, as well, because that's what it is. Well, so then, what in the world do we do about it?

**Dr. Ryan:** Well, it's what I call and what I use is called the six pack. I create a six pack of energy and longevity in these cells. And it's six things. I'll list them out and then I'll explain them a little bit as we go, focus and mindset, your food, nutrition, and fuel, fitness, exercise, and movement, refresh and sleep, refreshing sleep, function, spine, and posture, and then there's faith, purpose contribution, and I also put family in that one, as well. And I like to keep it simple. That's why I created *Fs* for all of them. So it's focus, food, fitness, function, refresh, and faith. I couldn't find a *F* word for sleep. So that's why it's refresh, small *R* big *S*.

**Dr. Eckel:** Perfect, that's great. So the five *Fs* of your longevity, your six pack, right. So you start with the focus as the first *F*. What do you got there?

**Dr. Ryan:** So focus is your mindset. This is not our conscious thoughts, our conscious being, this is the subconscious thoughts, beliefs, actions, I'm sorry, our habits, actions, and behaviors on a conscious level are, for the most part, controlled by our unconscious thoughts, beliefs, perfections.

And I don't want to get too woo-woo in this, but every thought we have, whether you know it's there or not, and most of the times we're numb to it because our lives are so busy and creating this business that we wear it like a badge of honor, we don't identify and recognize, we aren't aware of these thoughts and beliefs that we have. In every thought, every belief we have, it causes a chemical reaction. And those chemical reactions can boost or lower neurotransmitters that we need that are helpful to us or hinder us.



So the first step is our brains are designed...And I want to make it clear with this, mindset is not just positive thinking, the first step is actually becoming aware. Well, actually, the first step is accepting that our lives, the circumstances of our lives, the situations, how we perceive them, that's our story because, Greg, and you know, you could see an event happen and I could see an event happen, and we have two totally different takeaways from it, the exact same thing. So your world is different than my world because of how we perceive it.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah.

**Dr. Ryan:** So that's the first step is just becoming aware of what your beliefs are. And let's narrow it down to what are your beliefs as they center around your health? Do you believe that you are destined to get diseased, to get a brain issue, to get degeneration because your mom or dad did? Do you believe that everybody's going to get cancer?

See these are all like limiting beliefs that you say, maybe not out loud, but to yourselves when somebody gets Alzheimer's, or when somebody gets cancer, especially, where they, it's like, "Well, it's going to get everybody eventually. Well, yeah, I would rather, I guess, it get me when I'm 110 years old, than when I'm 50 years old. That's a big difference there.

So one is accepting and then two becoming aware of what you are telling yourself about your health. And I want to give you a quick tip here to reverse that. And again, this isn't again just the positive thinking because there are certain things that block us from this positive thinking. And it's our beliefs that lead to our actions and behaviors.

And I want you to just start counting your wins, which I know it sounds like, "Well, that's positive thinking." Yes and no. I'm talking positive thinking

isn't just this you're Positive Patty, and everything's great, and no matter what bad things happen or you're always just positive, counting your wins is more of okay picking out just little things in a situation.

Or let's say you are an overeater. I don't know, let's say you eat until the point to where you just can't eat anymore and you feel bad about yourself, you self-medicate with food, and then you feel about yourself. So maybe the win is you didn't beat yourself up for that. I know, again, it sounds different, but every time you beat yourself up for that moment of indiscretion, it leads to more and more of these reactions within your body. And it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that you're going to do it again, "See, I told you," but the next time you do it say, "Yep, I knew I couldn't stop doing that. I knew I was going to do that." It's all these always--

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah, pile it on. Yeah.

**Dr. Ryan:** you pile it on. And then even more, because that, the more you do that, the more it builds up. So now, maybe the next time a week goes by, you overeat, overeat, overeat. And then you stop before that point of overeating. And then you really, you're like, "Sweet, I didn't like completely bust a gut. I stopped. You know, I stopped."

And hopefully, that makes a little bit of sense. I know it sounds just like positive thinking. But I'm talking like if you're in the pit and you just try to think positively, you still have all that, like the physical gunk that we talked about, you still have all that mental gunk taking up that bucket to where you can't fit any of that positivity in there. So we have to slowly unravel it.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah, you see now that's a huge piece, that mindset on really watching the negative self-talk and just that those limiting beliefs are huge,



right, because if you've got that toxic mind, it doesn't matter what you lay on top of that, it could be the best nutrient in the world, it's just there's no room for it to go in there. So that's great that you start with that.

**Dr. Ryan:** Exactly. And that's the first part of all the programs that I run, either my Done with You program or my one-on-one coaching that I do with clients, that's because we've got to set that foundation. And then we go, because everybody wants, "What foods do I eat? What supplements do I take? Obviously, that's huge. That's why it's part of the six pack, but yes, we do these all concurrently.

It's not like, "Okay, we're just doing this one. We're going to get perfect at this and move on to the next." That's not how life works, but yes, obviously, food, nutrition, supplements, and even put essential oils in this realm because it's a fuel for your body, we need that to seal up.

One, get the gunk out, detoxify and then also to help upgrade what I call the brain and the cellular function to make sure it functions at a high level, to make sure it has the nutrients because that's another cause is when we have these toxins that are loaded in our system, there's no room for those nutrients and micronutrients so then that leads to deficiencies. And it creates this cycle to where, "Well, now I don't have enough magnesium. Now I'm deficient in B12 or my B vitamins."

And it's not just about supplementing with what you're deficient in—I know that sounds weird—but we have to find out what is the cause of why you're deficient in that. That deficiency could also be deficient in oxygen. Deficient because you're not breathing, which comes with the third part of it, which is our fitness, and exercise, and movement. And that's also focus and your breathing is just everything. That's also about the

function aspect of the six pack.

Yeah, so food, nutrition, supplements, if you're so far down the road where your body is toxic and your brain is toxic with heavy metals, with biotoxins, we have to bind those safely. Again, I'm not going to dive into that, the detoxification. I'm sure you have other experts on here that will go over that, but that is huge. And that's why it's on here because that's what's going to help leaky gut, that's going to help get those shoelaces tied really tight again, cut off the immune system so it's not attacking itself, so it's not attacking the cells that it's not supposed to be attacking.

**Dr. Eckel:** Awesome! Do you recommend any specific testing for folks on food or is it more of a guideline? I'm guessing it depends on what level they interface with you, but--

**Dr. Ryan:** Exactly, right, exactly. Yes, there is testing. There is urine tests, heavy metal toxicity tests, the organic acids test from Great Plains Labs, we've done that one quite a bit. And that gives a great overview of the metabolites that come from different biotoxins, different bacteria, viruses, but then also test certain neurotransmitters, and it tests certain vitamins and minerals, as well.

**Dr. Eckel:** Interesting. All right, so that's food. Now, you've got fitness. And we were talking about oxygen as being a big food for the brain. And now, we've got the fitness piece here.

**Dr. Ryan:** Well, fitness, it was probably my first love growing up as a kid. Three brothers, but an older brother, we would just always play basketball and just always outside with the ball in the backyard, sports. And I was just doing it because it was fun, I didn't realize it was good for brain, but now, I do.

But no, fitness is huge because it supplies oxygen



to the brain, it boosts serotonin, it boosts brain-derived neurotrophic factor, which is just as it sounds. Brain-derived neurotrophic factor, it stimulates this chemical that helps to promote our brain cell activation, promote new, it's called genesis creation of new brain cells and protects the brain.

Serotonin helps mood, helps thinking, executive function, helps just decrease the inflammation throughout the body, decrease insulin resistance. Fitness, that's why it's got to be a part of repairing, healing, and upgrading your brain. And there are some cultures where that is the most important thing. I don't like saying, okay, this one is most important or this part of the six pack is because I believe they're all equally important. But certain people might only be able to do...They might be able to put more attention on a couple of the six pack, rather than all of them.

So as we get into function, which we'll go into that next, so function means this, all function comes from the brain. It does that by sending energy, and signals, and communication down to the spinal cord which is inside your spine, through the nerves to every cell organ and tissue. So your posture directly affects your function because if we're interfering with those signals getting to wherever they need to go, well, now that's an interference as to deficiency in the nervous system function. And now, your body isn't going to live as long.

Actually, studies have shown that where it can take up to 15 years off your life because it puts so much stress on your spinal cord. You're not going to have the energy. You just waste your energy. And I'm not going to get into the full like what type of postures, but when we think of posture and spine, we think, okay--

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah, the hunched--

**Dr. Ryan:** the hunched over posture. But we could get into like where I'm shifted to the side and bent down one way. And that creates irritation on the nerves, as well. So think about it in this way, if we put a kink in the hose, so let's say your brain is the main faucet, you've got the hose going right down through the spine, and all these little other hoses going all throughout everywhere to water your lawn.

Now, if we put the kinks in the hose going to a certain area of the lawn, it doesn't matter, again, what food that we use, it doesn't matter a whole lot what type of positive mindset we have, it's not going to thrive and be optimally functioning because it doesn't have that brain signal telling it what to do or that water coming up telling it to grow. Okay, does that make sense?

**Dr. Eckel:** Right. Yeah, totally.

**Dr. Ryan:** I combined analogies there, but yeah.

**Dr. Eckel:** It's good. It worked. Dr. Ryan, it worked. So that's on the function and posture. One, I want to go back to fitness. Do you have specific recommendations on fitness for folks? You mentioned, depending on what the individual has, what's the best lever to push on for them at this specific moment and time?

But, in general, a guideline on the fitness front because fitness and exercise is a loaded term and immediately people, they're going to say, "Ah, you know, I heard that back in gym class in high school or whatever." And that's been 30, 40, 50 years ago". So I'm guessing any movement is better than no movement.

**Dr. Ryan:** Yes, movement, you said that word right there. And that's why it's fitness, movement, and exercise, because you're right, exercise and fitness. And it doesn't mean you have to run a marathon, it doesn't mean you have to do a bunch



of burpees, or high-intensity intervals, it's simply going for a walk. And that could be it right there to start off and then working your way up.

What I like to tell people to do or have people do is make a list of your favorite activities, whether it's like different cardio activities, different strength training activities. And again, strength training gets this connotation of lifting heavy weights. No, it's not lifting heavy weights, strength training is important to help keep your muscle mass because that helps to support your body, as well as support your brain. So make a list of even stretching activities. What are your favorite active activities that you like to do?

The second thing I love having people do, my clients, my patients, is incorporating it into their day, rather than trying to carve out 30 or 45 minutes of—from one minute to forty-five minutes—so instead of doing 45 minutes all in a row, split it up into like three 15-minute sessions. Or let's say your goal is a half hour. So let's do three 10-minute sessions to where every minute on the minute, you're doing like five pushups for 10 minutes.

And then later in the day, maybe every minute on the minute, and I'll explain what that means in a second, you do 10 squats with no weights, you just squat up and down to your level of ability for 10 minutes. So what that means is every minute on the minute, it's a great technique to use.

So you start a timer. You do five pushups. However long it takes you, you wait until it gets to that first minute. And then you do that five pushups again. And then you wait until the next minute and you do that for 10 minutes. So if you're doing let's say five, even if it's one pushup, then you're doing 10 pushups in 10 minutes, you start off with that. So I like people incorporating it into their day.

So what do I got? I'm in Michigan so it's winter time or during the winter time, there's usually snow. I don't have a snow blower so I shovel. And that's part of my activity. I also fold laundry, believe it or not. So what I'll do sometimes is I'll put the basket on the floor. I'll squat down. Pick up the item of clothing. Fold it. Put it on the couch. And I do that over and over again.

**Dr. Eckel:** Brilliant! Yeah, built right into the schedule and plus your wife probably loves you for that, too. Yeah, lovely. Well, okay, so thank you for that clarity on the fitness because it could be as simple as that like folding the laundry and just putting a squat in there, that's great. So you don't have to go out to the gym. There's none of those self-limiting beliefs of I don't have time. You're already moving your body. So just to emphasize and maximize that time. Refresh was another of the *Fs*. So what do you got?

**Dr. Ryan:** That is sleep. That is for the most part sleep. Sleep is where the brain drains. That sounds like it's leaky brain, but no, in a good way. Your brain, when you sleep, it detoxifies. And that's when it helps to get the gunk out, and drain it in from the glymphatic into the lymphatic into the bloodstream to get rid of it, and, yeah, into the bloodstream to get it out of your body.

And in our society today, there's too little sleep going on, not just quantity, but, also, the quality of sleep because we're looking at our cellphones up until we go to bed. It's sitting by our nightstand. We use it as an alarm clock. It's got EMFs, which I'm assuming you'll have some EMF experts talking about that on this summit, as well, where it can interrupt this normal process of the brain draining.

Draining the brain to get it healthy, to get rid of the toxins as much as possible, to get rid of, whether it's biotoxins or whether it's heavy metals. And when we talk about heavy metals,



a lot of times we need something a little bit extra to get that out if we've gone down the neurodegeneration route. But yeah, that's why sleep is so important.

And sometimes people feel they don't have seven or eight hours continuously for them to sleep. They might have young children, babies and toddlers, where they get up. I get it. So that's why we want to maximize the quality of sleep during those times when you can't get seven or eight hours. So we want to make sure we're in a dark room. We want to make sure we don't have blue light emitting LEDs in our room.

So we could get blackout curtains or even just get a bunch of like towels. I've used that before. Get bath towels and put them over the window. Night lights, you want to not have any night lights in your room because our body has sensors, our eyes have sensors to where if it senses this light, it's going to trick your brain into thinking it's time to be awake.

Now, the hormones and the neurotransmitters are going to get all out of whack. And it's going to lead down this cycle of hurting your circadian rhythm of when your brain and body knows it's time to sleep and then when it knows it's time to be awake. That's what the circadian rhythm is. So every day when you wake up, your circadian rhythm starts and says, "All right, whatever it is, 16 hours from now is when I'm going to be sleeping again." It starts it over.

And if we are constantly like, "You know, I've got a bunch of light shining on me right now and after this I'm going to put some blue light blocking glasses on because I've been in front of the computer all day with these lights. So I already want to start winding my body down as I get towards dinner time. So then my body knows, "Okay, it's time to start to relax. So I'm preparing my body and my brain that it's going to be time

for bed here in about three, four, five hours.

**Dr. Eckel:** Is there an optimum amount of sleep? Or like when you're talking about the quality of the sleep are you talking about deep sleep to REM sleep, along those lines?

**Dr. Ryan:** Yes, there is. And typically, seven to eight hours of quantity will get you through the cycles of sleep. So each cycle, where it's going from light sleep to REM, to light to non-REM, to deep sleep is at 90 minutes long. And there is a great book and study done by Dr. Michael Breus, I believe, and he talks about, for optimal sleep, so take a week period of time, seven days, you want to have 35 sleep cycles so 90-minute sleep cycles. So that equates to, I think it's seven. No, let's do the math.

So you want at least 30 of those sleep cycles. So that equates to about seven to eight hours of sleep a night, 30 to 35. And he also says that if you can't get that full 30 to 35, you can make it up with naps. So naps are different. He theorizes that it's like 30 to 45 minutes equated to a full 90 minute sleep cycle that you get at night. It's not like you have to take a 90-minute nap to catch up on those sleep cycles.

**Dr. Eckel:** Got it. Naps are more efficient.

**Dr. Ryan:** Hopefully, that makes sense.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah.

**Dr. Ryan:** Yeah, yeah, yep.

**Dr. Eckel:** But we'd rather you have better sleep at night.

**Dr. Ryan:** Yes, oh, yeah, definitely.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah. Excellent. All right so the sixth *F*, which is the faith, and purpose, and family.



**Dr. Ryan:** Yes, that's an important one. And when I say faith, it's not necessarily religion, it is for me. That's part of it for me. But it's also the contribution that you make in this world, the purpose that you have because that leads to more energy in your life. That leads to more focus. And even focus and faith are very intertwined. Faith is a belief in something that you just haven't seen yet.

So yes, focus and faith are very similar. And family comes with that. Your social interactions, your purpose, your contributions, your community, it's all lumped into one. And we're, I think again, we're trained to believe that we're to play small, for lack of a better way to do it is who am I? Who am I to be great? Well, one of my favorite quotes is from Marianne Williamson and it's, "Who am I not to be great?" That's the way we were made. That's why we were brought into this world. We have a purpose.

Sometimes, hey, I'd be honest with you, I lose it sometimes, but there are techniques and strategies that I use to remind myself of that every day. And when I get out of the habit of doing that, I notice a difference in my mood, I notice a difference in my interaction with my family. I need to make sure that I'm conscious of that because I want to show up for them, I want to show up for the listener here, too.

**Dr. Eckel:** Yeah. And that is so great. I love that poem by her, as well. I actually read it every day. It's on my mirror in my bathroom. So I'm totally in align there. And it is that purpose component, it really does get us going. And when you look at the longevity research, and I'm guessing that's where you put that in there around purpose, it really can get you through some dark periods of life and really get you playing at a much bigger game because who are you not to be great, and big, and bold, and shine that light bright?

That's a component of why I'm doing this summit is to help people. And I think a lot of times we feel very isolated and alone out there, especially with some of these diagnoses that go with a neurodegenerative condition. And this is a big one when you look at longevity. So I'm really glad you put that like as your sixth in the six pack. And it is one of the biggest punches, so to speak, that you can pull out. It's a great one to drive the whole ship.

In closing, any other big components that you want to share with our listeners?

**Dr. Ryan:** Oh, geez, that's simple and consistent with all of these. Too many times we want to wait until...I don't want to say we want to wait, but we wait and we take care of other things, then our health, our energy takes a back seat. And we don't realize how important our health is until it's gone. We don't realize how important our money is until it's gone.

But a quote that I like is actually, I think there's a component of it, but, "If your life doesn't have time for our health now, our health won't have time for our life later." And we're going to be just constantly going to doctor appointments. And my goal is to help people eliminate their dependence on drugs, and medications, and even insurance. So many times we think that's going to save us is insurance, and these drugs, and these medications.

And yes, we want them there to save us. We don't want them there to maintain and sustain us for our life because it won't create a nice, long, active healthy life, but by incorporating these tips that you're bringing to the world now, these strategies, taking little ones, simple, consistently, step-by-step.

That's why I talked about counting your wins. It doesn't have to be these big "aha experiences,"



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every time, it's these little things you do day after day after day after day. Make your health boring because when we start getting distracted by the new, shiny objects, the new food, the new exercises, that's when we're like, "Oh, it doesn't work," because we didn't do it consistently enough and we moved on too soon.

**Dr. Eckel:** Awesome! Thank you so much, Dr. Ryan, for coming on and sharing your information. This is awesome! Thanks.

